



# MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

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March 27, 2009

Senator Joan Carter Conway, Chair  
Senate Education, Health and  
Environmental Affairs Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West Wing  
11 Bladen St.  
Annapolis MD 21401

Dear Chairman Conway:

Thank you for your time yesterday. In follow-up to our conversation about the data that exists concerning the safety of alternatives to the brominated flame retardant deca-BDE, I consulted with Dr. Richard Eskin, MDE's Director of Science Services. He provided interesting information that I wanted to share with you.

In, *Alternatives to Deca-BDE in Televisions and Computers and Residential Upholstered Furniture* developed by the State of Washington Departments of Ecology and Health (December 29, 2008; <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/0907041.html>), those agencies identified a safer, technically feasible alternative chemical flame retardant for TVs and computers. Non-chemical alternatives were identified for upholstered furniture. The Fire Safety Committee found that the identified alternatives meet applicable fire safety standards and the Office of the State Fire Marshal concurred with that finding. As you know, the safer chemical flame retardant is resorcinol bis diphenyl phosphate (RDP). Many computer manufacturers have already moved away from the use of brominated flame retardants and appear to be transitioning toward this type of flame retardant.

Several laboratory studies on rodents that looked at numerous physiological and development endpoints found no health impacts that could be attributed to RDP. Also, RDP is not likely to be persistent in the environment and, based on Washington criteria, neither RDP nor its main breakdown products would qualify as persistent, bioaccumulative toxics, unlike BDEs that are both bioaccumulative and persistent.

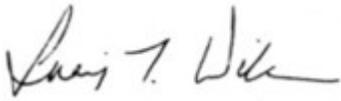


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Dr. Eskin's assessment is that RDP is both a safer and technically feasible alternative to the brominated flame retardants (BRFs) that is rapidly replacing the BRFs in both Europe and the US. It does not bioaccumulate like the BRFs and does not demonstrate toxic effects in the laboratory, and has been shown to be suitable substitute in terms of its flame retardant properties.

I am also attaching an article on this subject that you may find helpful. Again, thank you for your time. If you would like to discuss this further, please call me at 410-537-3084.

Sincerely,



Shari T. Wilson  
Secretary

Enclosure

